

Heaven - our living Hope!

Part 9

By Pastor Grant Williams

As we conclude this series “Heaven - Our living Hope!” In part 9, I want to remind you of the foundational passages that we have studied and built on throughout this series.

Remember, the New Testament Church was being attacked verbally and physically by not only the Roman government but by the religious leaders of the day. Jesus, Peter, Paul, Jude, John, continuously told you and I in the New Testament about the the Promise of Heaven.

Jesus told His disciples where HE was going, why HE needed to go (to prepare a place for them and for the Holy Spirit to come) and what they must do to get there: sin, judgment, righteousness.

John 14:1-9 AMPC

1 **Do not let your hearts be troubled** (distressed, agitated). You believe in and adhere to and trust in and rely on God; believe in and adhere to and trust in and rely also on Me.

2 In My Father's house there are many dwelling places (homes). If it were not so, I would have told you; **for I am going away to prepare a place for you.**

3 And when (if) I go and make ready a place for you, **I will come back again and will take you to Myself, that where I am you may be also.**

4 **And [to the place] where I am going, you know the way.**

5 Thomas said to Him, Lord, we do not know where You are going, so **how can we know the way?**

6 Jesus said to him, **I am the Way and the Truth and the Life;** no one comes to the Father except by (through) Me.

7 If you had known Me [had learned to recognize Me], you would also have known My Father. From now on, you know Him and have seen Him.

This is Peter from our foundational passage...

1 Peter 1:3-25 AMPC

3 Praised (honored, blessed) be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ (the Messiah)! By His boundless mercy we have been born again to an ever-living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,

4 [Born anew] into an inheritance which is beyond the reach of change and decay [imperishable], unsullied and unfading, reserved in heaven for you,

Jesus is our Living Hope and our inheritance is reserved in Heaven!

5 Who are being guarded (garrisoned) by God's power through [your] faith [till you fully inherit that [c]final] salvation that is ready to be revealed [for you] in the last time.

6 [You should] be exceedingly glad on this account, though now for a little while you may be distressed by trials and suffer temptations,

7 So that [the genuineness] of your faith may be tested, [your faith] which is infinitely more precious than the perishable gold which is tested and purified by fire. [This proving of your faith is intended] to redound to [your] praise and glory and honor when Jesus Christ (the Messiah, the Anointed One) is revealed.

8 Without having seen Him, you love Him; though you do not [even] now see Him, you believe in Him and exult and thrill with inexpressible and glorious (triumphant, heavenly) joy.

9 [At the same time] you receive the result (outcome, consummation) of your faith, the salvation of your souls.

10 The prophets, who prophesied of the grace (divine blessing) which was intended for you, searched and inquired earnestly about this salvation.

11 They sought [to find out] to whom or when this was to come which the Spirit of Christ working within them was indicating when He predicted the sufferings of Christ and the glories that should follow [them].

12 It was then disclosed to them that the services they were rendering were not meant for themselves and their period of time, but for you. [It is these very] things which have now already been made known plainly to you by those who preached the good news (the Gospel) to you by the [same] Holy Spirit sent from heaven. Into these things [the very] angels long to look!

13 So brace up your minds; be sober (circumspect, morally alert); set your hope wholly and unchangeably on the grace (divine favor) that is coming to you when Jesus Christ (the Messiah) is revealed.

14 [Live] as children of obedience [to God]; do not conform yourselves to the evil desires [that governed you] in your former ignorance [when you did not know the requirements of the Gospel].

15 But as the One Who called you is holy, you yourselves also be holy in all your conduct and manner of living.

16 For it is written, You shall be holy, for I am holy.

17 And if you call upon Him as [your] Father Who judges each one impartially according to what he does, [then] you should conduct yourselves with true reverence throughout the time of your temporary residence [on the earth, whether long or short].

18 You must know (recognize) that you were redeemed (ransomed) from the useless (fruitless) way of living inherited by tradition from [your] forefathers, not with corruptible things [such as] silver and gold,

19 But [you were purchased] with the precious blood of Christ (the Messiah), like that of a [sacrificial] lamb without blemish or spot.

20 It is true that He was chosen and foreordained (destined and foreknown for it) before the foundation of the world, **but He was brought out to public view (made manifest) in these last days (at the end of the times) for the sake of you.**

21 Through Him you believe in (adhere to, rely on) God, Who raised Him up from the dead and gave Him honor and glory, **so that your faith and hope are [centered and rest] in God.**

22 **Since by your obedience** to the Truth through the [Holy] Spirit you have purified your hearts for the sincere affection of the brethren, [see that you] love one another fervently from a pure heart.

23 You have been regenerated (born again), not from a mortal [d]origin ([e]seed, sperm), but from one that is immortal by the ever living and lasting Word of God.

24 For all flesh (mankind) is like grass, and all its glory (honor) like [the] flower of grass. The grass withers and the flower drops off,

25 But the Word of the Lord ([f]divine instruction, the Gospel) endures forever. And **this Word is the good news which was preached to you.**

Peter is reminding and reassuring the New Testament Church about their new life and hope of heaven. He was also reminding them to be obedient to God's Word, His Commands and be Holy as "He is Holy". Many thought they may had missed the rapture, thought they were going through the tribulation. The New Testament Church believed that was Jesus who died on the cross fulfilling what was foretold by the prophets and as a result religion was falling apart as it was being exposed.

Peter was not saying anything new but reminding them of what had already been spoken of by the Prophets, the New Testament writers and Jesus Himself.

Paul encouraged the church in his first letter as well by reminding them about the rapture of the church and being caught up together to heaven. His instructions and reminder was also on ***how to get to heaven...*** be obedient to His Word, commands or precepts.

1 Thessalonians 4:1-18 AMPC

1 Furthermore, [a]brethren, **we beg and admonish you in [virtue of our union with] the Lord Jesus, that [you follow the instructions which] you learned from us about how you ought to walk so as to please and gratify God,** as indeed you are doing, [and] that you do so even more and more abundantly [attaining yet greater perfection in living this life].

2 **For you know what charges and precepts we gave you** [[b]on the authority and by the inspiration of] the Lord Jesus.

3 **For this is the will of God**, that you should be consecrated (separated and set apart for pure and holy living): that you should abstain and shrink from all sexual vice,

4 That each one of you should know how to [c]possess (control, manage) his own [d]body in consecration (purity, separated from things profane) and honor,

5 Not [to be used] in the passion of lust like the heathen, who are ignorant of the true God and have no knowledge of His will,

6 That no man transgress and overreach his brother and defraud him in this matter or defraud his brother in business. For the Lord is an avenger in all these things, as we have already warned you solemnly and [e]told you plainly.

7 For God has not called us to impurity but to consecration [to dedicate ourselves to the most thorough purity].

8 Therefore whoever disregards (sets aside and rejects this) disregards not man but God, Whose [very] Spirit [Whom] He gives to you is holy (chaste, pure).

9 But concerning brotherly love [for all other Christians], you have no need to have anyone write you, for you yourselves have been [personally] taught by God to love one another.

10 And indeed you already are [extending and displaying your love] to all the brethren throughout Macedonia. But we beseech and earnestly exhort you, brethren, that you [f]excel [in this matter] more and more,

11 To make it your ambition and definitely endeavor to live quietly and peacefully, to mind your own affairs, and to work with your hands, as we charged you,

12 So that you may bear yourselves becomingly and be correct and honorable and command the respect of the outside world, being dependent on nobody [self-supporting] and having need of nothing.

13 **Now also we would not have you ignorant, brethren, about those who fall asleep [[g]in death]**, that you may not grieve [for them] as the rest do who have no hope [beyond the grave].

14 **For since we believe that Jesus died and rose again**, even so **God will also bring with Him** through Jesus those who have fallen asleep [[h]in death].

*15 **For this we declare to you by the Lord's [own] word,** that we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord shall in no way precede [into His presence] or have any advantage at all over those who have previously fallen asleep [in Him [i]in death].*

16 For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a loud cry of summons, with the shout of an archangel, and with the blast of the trumpet of God. And those who have departed this life in Christ will rise first.

*17 Then we, the living ones who remain [on the earth], **shall simultaneously be caught up along with [the resurrected dead] in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air; and so always (through the eternity of the eternities) we shall be with the Lord!***

*18 **Therefore comfort and encourage one another with these words.***

Two thousand years ago the New Testament Church needed to be reminded about the Hope of Heaven and how to get there or, the only way to get there.

John 14:6 AMPC

*6 Jesus (the Word) said to him, **I am the Way and the Truth** and the Life; no one comes to the Father except by (through) Me. (The Word)*

John 1:1 AMPC

*1 In the beginning [before all time] **was the Word (Christ),** and the Word was with God, and the Word was God Himself.*

Hebrews 13:8 KJV

8 Jesus Christ (The word or the truth) the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever.

Malachi 3:6 AMPC

6 For I am the Lord (The Word the truth), I do not change;

Isaiah 33:22 AMPC

22 For the Lord (the Word the truth) is our Judge, the Lord is our Lawgiver, the Lord is our King; He will save us.

John 14:15 KJV

15 **If ye love me**, keep my commandments. (the Word the truth)

John 16:8-13 AMPC

8 And when He (the Holy Spirit) comes, He will convict and convince the world and bring demonstration to it about **sin** and about **righteousness (uprightness of heart and right standing with God)** and about **judgment**:

13 But when He, the **Spirit of Truth** (the Truth-giving Spirit) comes, **He will guide you into all the Truth** (the whole, full Truth). For He will not speak His own message **[on His own authority - wolves will]**; but He will tell whatever He hears [from the Father; He will give the message that has been given to Him], and **He will announce and declare to you the things that are to come [that will happen in the future]**.

John 17:14-19 AMPC

14 I have given and delivered to them Your word (message) and the world has hated them, because they are not of the world [do not belong to the world], just as I am not of the world.

15 I do not ask that You will take them out of the world, but that You will keep and protect them from the evil one. 16 They are not of the world (worldly, belonging to the world), [just] as I am not of the world.

17 **Sanctify them [purify, consecrate, separate them for Yourself, make them holy] by the Truth; Your Word is Truth.**

18 Just as You sent Me into the world, I also have sent them into the world.

19 And so for their sake and on their behalf I sanctify (dedicate, consecrate) Myself, **that they also may be sanctified (dedicated, consecrated, made holy) in the Truth.**

Thomas asked Jesus or the Word about where He was going and how to get there... Remember, there is no “thing” new under the sun.

I want to highlight some of the “things” regarding a timeline that we have studied in this series and “things” that can be confusing and or easy to forget because they are not preached or taught often...

- O Time of the Hebrew people (Abraham) to the time of Christ is 2,000 years
- O Time of the gentiles (nation undesired or peculiar people) from the time of Christ until the rapture of the church
- O The rapture of the church (those who died habitually obedient to God’s Word and those alive habitually obedient to God’s Word) will take place prior to the 7 year tribulation occurring at the signing of the 7 year peace treaty. This could be right before, during or after the war of Gog and Magog listed in Ezekiel 38 & 39.
- O The rapture is a promise that we will escape the judgments that will come upon the whole earth for those who are not caught up.
- O The Judgment Seat of Christ happens during the 7 year tribulation when we are in heaven. Rewards will be given to those found habitually righteous.
- O At the end of the 7 year tribulation the saints (those caught up in the rapture and those who died in the 7 years tribulation for believing in Christ and not taking the mark (chip, stamp of etching) of the one world government and religion... will come down from heaven with Jesus for the Battle of Armageddon. (Armies only of the nations listed in the Bible)
- O At the end of the 7 years tribulation and after the Battle of Armageddon the Millennial Reign of Christ begins. We will rule and reign with Him over the nations as some people on earth during the 7 years tribulation will make it through and repopulate the earth. *(Continued next page)*

We, those caught up in the rapture will be busy rebuilding the Israel, the territories of the 12 Tribes of Israel and Jerusalem where Jesus will reign.

- O At the end of the 1,000 years satan is loosed one more time and those who made it through the 7 year tribulation and born during the 1,000 years will be tried, tempted and tested. This is not for those caught up in the rapture, we will never be tried, tempted or tested again.
- O At the end of the 1,000 years the world will attack Jesus and the saints and will be defeated which is followed by the Great White Throne judgement. Those who have been not been found habitually righteous throughout all of man's history will be sentenced to eternity in the Lake of Fire.
- O The New Heaven & the New Earth begin follower the 1,000 year reign with the New Jerusalem coming down that has been under construction before Adam and Eve. God's Word said that Satan was helping build the New Jerusalem and chose to be disobedient and influenced 1/3 of the angels to go with him.

In part 8 we read the Bible's description (as best as it could be described to our finite minds) of what the New Heaven/Earth will be like.

1 Corinthians 2:9 KJV

9 But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him.

I want to speak to you about a question I get often about those who don't make it to heaven and the sadness that many believers said they will feel... It is a terrible "thing" to even think about, eternity in the Lake of Fire. We need to be witnessing and making disciples. Also, will we remember those from earth that we knew in this new glorified body?

Isaiah 65:17 AMPC

*17 For behold, **I create new heavens and a new earth.** And **the former things shall not be remembered or come into mind.***

So does this mean that all those close to us, friends, family who don't make it to heave we won't remember? Yes, this is what Paul said...

1 Corinthians 13:12 KJV

*12 For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; **but then shall I know even as also I am known.***

The reason there will be certain former “things” that will not be remembered is... there will be friends, family, people close to you, that will not make it into the kingdom of heaven. If we were to remember that, while, in heaven, in our eternity, that would make us full of sadness. But God said that HE will forget our sins... I don't know how HE will cause us to remember certain “things” and not others but HE is God.

Revelation 21 AMPC

1 Then I saw a new [a]sky (heaven) and a new earth, for the former [b]sky and the former earth had passed away (vanished), and there no longer existed any sea.

2 And I saw the holy city, the new Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God, all arrayed like a bride beautified and adorned for her husband;

3 Then I heard a mighty voice from the throne and I perceived its distinct words, saying, See! The abode of God is with men, and He will live (encamp, tent) among them; and they shall be His people, and God shall personally be with them and be their God.

4 God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; and death shall be no more, neither shall there be anguish (sorrow and mourning) nor grief nor pain any more, for the old conditions and the former order of things have passed away.

5 *And He Who is seated on the throne said, See! I make all things new. Also He said, Record this, for these sayings are faithful (accurate, incorruptible, and trustworthy) and true (genuine).*

6 *And He [further] said to me, It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End. To the thirsty I [Myself] will give water without price from the fountain (springs) of the water of Life.*

7 *He who is victorious shall inherit all these things, and I will be God to him and he shall be My son.*

8 *But as for the cowards and the ignoble and the contemptible and the cravenly lacking in courage and the cowardly submissive, and as for the unbelieving and faithless, and as for the depraved and defiled with abominations, and as for murderers and the lewd and adulterous and the practicers of magic arts and the idolaters (those who give supreme devotion to anyone or anything other than God) and all liars (those who knowingly convey untruth by word or deed)—[all of these shall have] their part in the lake that blazes with fire and brimstone. This is the second death.*

9 *Then one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls filled with the seven final plagues (afflictions, calamities) came and spoke to me. He said, Come with me! I will show you the bride, the Lamb's wife.*

10 *Then in the Spirit He conveyed me away to a vast and lofty mountain and exhibited to me the holy (hallowed, consecrated) city of Jerusalem descending out of heaven from God,*

11 *Clothed in God's glory [in all its splendor and radiance]. The luster of it resembled a rare and most precious jewel, like jasper, shining clear as crystal.*

12 *It had a massive and high wall with twelve [large] gates, and at the gates [there were stationed] twelve angels, and [on the gates] the names of the twelve tribes of the sons of Israel were written:*

13 *On the east side three gates, on the north side three gates, on the south side three gates, and on the west side three gates.*

14 *And the wall of the city had twelve foundation [stones], and on them the twelve names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb.*

15 *And he who spoke to me had a golden measuring reed (rod) to measure the city and its gates and its wall.*

16 *The city lies in a square, its length being the same as its width. And he measured the city with his reed—12,000 stadia (about 1,500 miles); its length and width and height are the same.*

17 *He measured its wall also—144 cubits (about 72 yards) by a man's measure [[c]of a cubit from his elbow to his third fingertip], which is [the measure] of the angel.*

18 *The wall was built of jasper, while the city [itself was of] pure gold, clear and transparent like glass.*

19 *The foundation [stones] of the wall of the city were ornamented with all of the precious stones. The first foundation [stone] was jasper, the second sapphire, the third chalcedony (or white agate), the fourth emerald,*

20 *The fifth onyx, the sixth sardius, the seventh chrysolite, the eighth beryl, the ninth topaz, the tenth chrysoprase, the eleventh jacinth, the twelfth amethyst.*

21 *And the twelve gates were twelve pearls, each separate gate being built of one solid pearl. And the main street (the Broadway) of the city was of gold as pure and translucent as glass.*

22 *I saw no temple in the city, for the Lord God Omnipotent [Himself] and the Lamb [Himself] are its temple.*

23 *And the city has no need of the sun nor of the moon to give light to it, for the splendor and radiance (glory) of God illuminate it, and the Lamb is its lamp.*

24 *The nations shall walk by its light and the rulers and leaders of the earth shall bring into it their glory.*

25 *And its gates shall never be closed by day, and there shall be no night there.*

26 *They shall bring the glory (the splendor and majesty) and the honor of the nations into it.*

27 *But nothing that defiles or profanes or is [d]unwashed shall ever enter it, nor anyone who commits abominations (unclean, detestable, morally repugnant things) or practices falsehood, but only those whose names are recorded in the Lamb's Book of Life.*